

FINISHED FILE
ITU WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2017
BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

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OPENING CEREMONY

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>> Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. The Opening Ceremony will take place in a few moments. Thank you.

(Speaking non-English language)

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats, as the Opening Ceremony will begin very shortly. Thank you.

(Speaking non-English language)

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, please take your seat.

(Speaking non-English language)

>> Excellencies, honorable guests, please allow me to welcome you to the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017, held here in Buenos Aires in Argentina.

I wanted to begin the ceremony by inviting you to watch this brief video message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres.

(Video playing)

Sustainable Development Goals. They have shown us how these technologies can inform people to make their lives for the better, and we also need to bridge the digital divide and the unintended consequences of innovation. We need to do more to address the implications for mathematics, global security, and indeed the fabric of all societies. Communication technologies can help us on each and every Sustainable Development Goal, and I look forward to working with you to consider the way forward

and to harness this great power for the benefit of all.

In that spirit, I wish you a successful conference.

(End of video)

(Applause)

>> Ladies and gentlemen --

>> Thank you to Mr. Guterres for taking time to prepare the message. A small technical request on the podium. I believe we do not have translation kits. If we could have the kits delivered. Thank you.

Argentina has given birth to many, many proud sons and daughters, and we are very honored today to receive a message from one of Argentina's finest sons, His Holiness, Pope Francis, to be read by His Eminence, Apostolic Nuncio for the Holy See in Argentina. Please join me.

>> Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good morning to all of you. On behalf of His Eminence Cardinal Powellin, Secretary of State of His Holiness, I have the honor to transmit to you the message which His Holiness, Pope Francis, addressed to His Excellency, Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union on the occasion of this World Telecommunication Development Conference in Buenos Aires.

The message reads as follows: Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of the international telecommunication development Conference, His Holiness, Pope Francis, was pleased to learn of the World Telecommunication Conference to take place in Buenos Aires from the 9th to the 20th of October 2017. To you and to all those gathered for this occasion, as you reflect on communication technologies and their contribution to social and economic development, His Holiness encourages you to deepen your commitment to constructive forms of communications that reject prejudice towards others and foster a culture of helping all of us to view the world around us with realism and trust.

It is his ardent hope that in your discussions you will explore ways in which access to telecommunication technology can help to promote the dignity of every person, especially in the poorest and the most marginalized sectors of society. I sugar you of a special closeness, Pope Francis prays that he may guide your efforts, signed by your holiness. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention and wish you success in your endeavors and a pleasant stay in Buenos Aires. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

>> It is now a great pleasure to invite Mr. Brahima Sanou, the Director of the Development Bureau Communication to share with us a few words. Mr. Sanou, the floor is yours. Thank you.

(Applause)

>> BRAHIMA SANOU: His Excellency, Mr. Marcos Pena, Chief of Ministerial Cabinet; His Excellency, Mr. Jorge Faurie, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Culture; His Excellency, Mr. Andres Ibarra, Minister for Modernization; His Eminence, Monsignor Emil

Paul Tscherrig, Apostolic Nuncio; Honorable Deputy Prime Minister of Slovenia; Honorable Ministers, Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of ITU; Mr. Malcolm Johnson, Deputy Secretary-General of the ITU; Mr. Francois Rancy, director of the Radiocommunication Bureau, Mr. Chaesub Lee, director of the Standardization Bureau; Heads of Delegation representing Member States, Sector Members of ITU-D; and academia, those who participate in the work of ITU-D; and all dignitaries here present, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, good morning to all of you.

It is a pleasure and honor to welcome you all to the World Telecommunication Development Conference, WTDC-17. I would like to thank His Holiness, Pope Francis, and Mr. Antonio Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General, for their inspiring messages.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the government and the people of Argentina for their warm and kind hospitality and for the excellent facilities put at our disposal for this conference.

Indeed, the first World Telecommunication Development Conference, held after the establishment ITU-D, took place here in Buenos Aires from 21st-29th of March 1994.

I wonder how many of you were in this conference. Could you please raise your hand, those that were here in 1994.

(Applause)

Thank you. Thank you, thank you very much. Your commitment and your dedication greatly contributed to the success of ITU-D. I'm glad that you are here today to celebrate all together the 25th anniversary of ITU-D.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, since the creation of ITU-D, through the additional plenipotentiary conference of 1992, the world has changed significantly. Never has the growth of the ICT sector been as strong as we have seen in the last 25 years. New technologies have contributed to economic growth and have improved lives.

Since it was set up in 1992, the development sector of ITU has supported the efforts that countries make to use telecommunication ICTs as a catalyst for development. In particular, I refer to the provision of assistance in terms of infrastructure development, capacity building, cybersecurity, and telecommunications and integrating the principle of gender equality and other connected themes.

The results seen have been significant, and we must encourage and foster further work to ensure that each individual can fully capitalize on the possibilities offered by ICTs in order to take their destiny into their own hands and lead to socioeconomic development and lead to peace throughout the world.

The Sustainable Development Goals, the SDGs that were developed in 2015, offer a fantastic opportunity to place the

ICTs at the very center of people's lives. The SDGs have broadened our horizons. Today it is our duty not only to provide broadband access and ICTs which are affordable for all, but also to place ICTs within other sectors of the economy such as health, education, agriculture, and trade, but to name a few. Therefore, our work must go beyond the ICT sector to take into account the new ICT ecosystem.

I stand convinced, and I'm sure that you'll share this view, that at the very center of this new ecosystem we find people. At the very heart of the system, we have people. More than 3.9 billion people still don't have access to the Internet. That's here in our room and our families. Therefore, it is about ensuring that each person in the world, regardless of their age, their sex, their race, their religion, or their national origin or their economic status, have access to the Internet.

I personally am very proud of the achievements of ITU-D. Thanks to the commitment of Member States and Sector Members of ITU-D, today the ITU-D sector is positioned as a neutral platform and a robust one in order to foster development whilst taking into account the human dimension of it, of ICTs. I would like to thank Mr. Houlin Zhao, the general secretary of the ITU-D, and my other colleagues for their support. I would like to pay graduate due to the staff of the ITU, and in particular the staff of the development sector, for their enthusiasm, for their work and all the efforts undertaken within the framework of carrying out ITU-D's mandate.

I'd also like to pay tribute to all the pioneers, all the pioneers, I stress, who created ITU-D. I'd like to pay particular tribute to my predecessors. I'd like to name them here. Mr. Arnold Djiwatampu, who is here today, I can see you. Mr. -- I'd like you to show yourself, Mr. Djiwatampu.

(Applause)

He was the first director of ITU-D. Mr. Ahmed Laouyane, please, can you make your way to the room. The second director of the BDT. Dr. Hamadoun Toure, the third director of the BDT. and Mr. Sami Al-Basheer, can you please make yourself known to the room. You're the fourth director of the BDT. I would like to thank you for accepting my invitation to join us here to celebrate the 25th anniversary of ITU-D.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I stand convinced that WTDC-17 will be a memorable event. The whole world is looking upon us and gives us hope for our work that we can provide for them high-quality ICT telecommunication services to stimulate development. That really is the crux of the theme of this conference, namely ICTs for the Sustainable Development Goals.

I'm sure that you are as enthusiastic and as excited as I am by this conference and the enormous possibilities that it offers our sector. Our role is a very noble one. It is about our collective contribution towards the Sustainable Development

Goals. Let's all seize this historical moment. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

>> Thank you very much, Mr. Sanou. It is an honor for us to invite His Excellency, Mr. Pena, the chief of the Ministerial Cabinet, to speak to us on behalf of the host country.

(Applause)

>> MARCOS PENA: Good morning. Welcome to Buenos Aires, welcome to Argentina. I want to send a very warm regard from our President Mr. Mauricio Macri and our mayor and give you the welcome here to this conference.

For us it is an enormous privilege to find you here for many reasons. Firstly, because we stand convinced that in this phase of change, which Argentina is undergoing, the change for enthusiasm, for transformation, to integrate ourselves into the world to be receiving countries this type of events, this allows us to offer the opportunities for dialogue and discussion, which has always been a characteristic of our country and our society.

In a few moments, we'll also have the WTDC conference here. We'll also host the presidency of the G20. We'll have the Youth Olympic games we'll have next year, and as part of the spirit in our central message of the G20, the idea of building consensus as far as sustainable development. This is the very spirit that we wanted to share with you at this conference, a conference where you'll be comfortable, and hopefully in the days ahead, you can also visit some of this beautiful city and this beautiful country, a country which has a history to receive visitors from all over the world.

Furthermore, we stand firmly convinced to have a better world is a connected world, and this revolution and transformation of humanity can be found through telecommunications, and it should reach all people in the planet, in particular, in order to ensure the Sustainable Development Goals which the UN has fixed for us. We think that more additional inclusion and more access and more communication for all will lead to freedom, more democracy, and more transparency, and this will build a better world for all. We stand convinced that we have to look positively towards telecommunication change as tools that will allow us to resolve the problem of humanity which we are facing, such as poverty, inequality, climate change, peacekeeping, and upholding human rights.

Likewise, we think that the democracy is strengthened through citizens who are connected, who have capacity to not only receive information but also to produce information, and with this, we believe that Argentina, in the spirit of an entrepreneurial shape of our people, has a lot to bring towards the ecosystem of communication and technology. Sometimes we have difficult situations. We can serve as an example that Argentina is a country of change for other countries, for young people and

for all of these communities that are looking for a better future for themselves, for the communities, and for their families.

Finally, just let me say Argentina is committed to reduce violence, to reduce terrorism, drug trafficking, and other issues which take advantage of technology towards negative ends, so we'll continue to work with all countries in order to strengthen tools against cyber terrorism, cyber bullying, or any other kind of negative violent approach which may use technology to these needs. We are optimistic and enthusiastic. We want to be at the very center of the 21st Century, and in this vein, I would like to, once again, give you a warm welcome to Argentina. In all these days ahead of work, I hope that you can reach the goals which you have ahead of you. Thank you very much, and I wish you a very good day.

(Applause)

>> Thank you very much, your excellency. I'd like to invite the Secretary-General, Mr. Houlin Zhao, to give his opening remarks. Mr. Zhao, please.

>> HOULIN ZHAO: Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure to welcome you to the seventh World Telecommunication Development Conference held here in Buenos Aires. This conference was first held here 23 years ago, which was the first WTDC, following the creation of the development sector of ITU.

I'd like to convey my sincere gratitude to Argentina and the City of Buenos Aires for hosting this conference while showing the world once again that information and communication technologies and sustainable development go hand in hand.

ITU and Argentina have had a long and fruitful relationship of cooperation. Throughout the years Argentina has made viable contributions to the activities of ITU. I am very pleased to share with you that His Holiness, Pope Francis, has sent us a message. It was a true honor and privilege for me to meet His Holiness in his office on the 1st of September. His Holiness, Pope Francis, highlighted the important role that ICTs play and new technologies play in order to strive for better humanity and one which is more united. This role also plays a center role in the video message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres.

In this video, he reminds us that ICTs are an empowering tool for people, enabling lives to be transformed for the better.

If I could continue.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a critical moment. More than 3.9 billion people are still unconnected what can we do for them, and in particular for those living in the most vulnerable areas and in developing countries?

The theme of this Conference - ICTs for Sustainable Development Goals is really a very opportune thing because now

more than ever we need ICTs to promote development and to foster the achievement of the SDG vision to ensure that no one is left behind.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, in this journey which we're making together, our work must be guided by four pillars. These are infrastructure, investment, innovation, and inclusion, the three Is.

Firstly, infrastructure is the very backbone for the digital economy. Building the next generation of infrastructure for the ICTs will foster the development of cities and smart cities and communities which are sustainable throughout the world. Not only to we have to connect everybody but also connect everything.

Secondly, investment is an enabling factor for sustainable development. ICTs are enablers. They can accelerate development in relation to the SDGs; however, we must also set up an enabling environment for investment and to develop innovative funding mechanisms.

Furthermore, public-private associations which are innovative in nature to address all areas of industry and all sectors. In particular, in difficult areas you have difficulty in accessing the Internet.

The third pillar, innovation creates opportunities. Since we met last time, endeavors have been focused on developing new technologies such as macro data, 5G, Cloud computing, Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence. We have also promoted the business initiative in the ICT sphere. We have fostered digital innovation ecosystems, and we have accelerated digital transformation.

The very front line of industrial transformation and of economic growth, both in the developed and the developing markets, entrepreneurs, and the small and medium enterprises, all of these are essential players in the new ecosystem.

Finally, inclusion is the very crux of prosperity and peace. It lies at the heart of it. More than two billion adults still don't have a formal bank account. The majority of these can be found in developing economies; however, 1.6 billion of these people have access to a mobile telephone and potentially to digital financial services. Digital financial inclusion is just one of many examples. They can be a factor towards the elimination of poverty, job creation, gender equality, and the empowerment of women.

In order to study the way to work towards ICTs on the SDGs, we must remember the difference that a mobile telephone can provide to people throughout the planet.

Ladies and gentlemen, let's remember that together we're stronger, together we can make the most of ICTs in order to achieve the 2030 agenda and to carry out the promise of a decent life for all. Let these principles and pillars of which I have spoken guide our work during this conference.

It is our responsibility to make ICTs available to all nations, to all people, and throughout all sectors of society.

Your excellency, thank you for honoring this Opening Ceremony with your presence here. On behalf of all the participants of the Conference, allow me, once again, to express our sincere gratitude, and through you, gratitude to the people of Argentina for their warm welcome and extraordinary hospitality which we have been given. I wish all of you a very successful and productive conference. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

>> Now I'd like to invite His Excellency, Mr. Andres Ibarra, the minister of modernization from Argentina, to address the floor. Thank you.

(Applause)

>> ANDRES IBARRA: Good morning. For me and for all of us and for our team and for my government and for the ministry, it is a real honor to be here and to be with all of you in the room, together with ITU. ITU is doing significant work throughout all countries with regards to this really important theme, which is Development of ICTs.

I would like to pay gratitude specifically to Mr. Brahima Sanou, the director of the BDT, to Mr. Houlin Zhao, the Secretary-General of the ITU, and also to especially say thank you to you for the real efforts you've you made with your speech by delivering it in Spanish, so thank you very much, Houlin, for that.

(Applause)

Mr. Malcolm Johnson, the Deputy Secretary-General of the ITU, I think he was one of the members who was here in Buenos Aires in 1994, so congratulations, Mr. Johnson. To Mr. Francois Rancy, the director of the Standardization of ITU, Mr. Chaesub Lee, and of course, thank you very much to the message from the Pope. We're so grateful for that, and thank you very much -- in particular, I would like to thank the director who was in this place before me who initiated this process for this conference held here in Argentina. Thank you very much, Oscar.

For us, it is extremely important, it is a step forward as our head of cabinet said, in this very important process which the President is working on, which is building trust in our country. This is one of the most important events which we're going to hold over the next few months, and next month we'll also host the regional meeting of the Open Government Partnership, in December in Argentina, the World Trade Organization, and next year with the G20 and the Youth Olympic Games. All of these events and the different initiatives which are under way, they all revolve around the creation of faith and trust in our country from within and from outside because what we're looking for is to generate integration across all sectors so that Argentina grows and returns to be a credible state and this is shared throughout the world so institutions, countries,

businesses, organizations -- this is really the crux of what we're striving towards through the Action Plan and our Government Plan, and this idea of trust and faith is being carried out through promising indicators in the development of the economy, growth of different sectors, and job creation, which is a really important objective for all of us, and everything with regards to generating a financial system with more than 50,000 mortgages have been granted in Argentina this year, so we think that we are working towards this goal, and numbers are beginning to show that change is possible and that this path is worth taking.

Of course, within the framework of this and as a very important aspect, which we would like to move forward within our policy, the digital strategy and the digital agenda. First, for the first time, Argentina will have, in the next few months, a true digital strategic plan with a digital agenda which will focus very precisely on all the things from which we are working but which can be seen consolidated in a real strategy, which will be taken together with standards, decrees, laws within a framework of legality for all of our country, so we are focusing on everything that has to do with a digital government which uses technology for its development, an open government, which is an essential part of our concept of government. This is something which the President is behind. The very essence of what we must look at is transparency and open government with a digital economy which will be rolled out -- which is being rolled out throughout the economy and with real digital systems in this process, and we'll give them the students, so this transformation process can be moved forward on a basis of a solid, robust strategy in terms of connectivity and communication.

Of course, to do this, we have to ensure universal access to competitiveness and to skills and quality to digital infrastructure, a regulatory framework which is fit for purpose, and two big objectives, which are to reduce very significantly the digital divide which we are aware of, and we have put this at the very heart of the agenda in order to achieve more than two million homes which don't have access to the Internet, and over the next few years we'll put in place conditions. In about three million homes you have real difficulties in terms of speed of the broadband. Today it is a key need so that Argentina and the economic infrastructure of our country can develop. We feel that the speed of six megabytes per second, and we need to reach the objectives down by the ITU-D and the European Union of between 20 and 30 megabytes per second. We're working towards this in order to reduce the digital divide -- this is a necessary condition -- so that our country can develop and together, with the economy can grow and lead to sustainable growth in this area.

Obviously, as we're moving forwards in the last 20 month of

our government, we are moving on all of these issues. We have an important digital inclusion plan in place in order to reduce these divides, so ARSAT is working on the state plan of 300 areas have managed to be connected and with a view to having 1.3 million places connected and 22,000 kilometers of fiber optic cables have been laid, and ARSAT has over 540 projects hosted in data centers, so before this, less than 3%; now we have more than 540 projects which have been hosted across municipalities and many eGovernment projects, and these have been hosted in data centers.

Also, have a very significant aim of development in terms of cybersecurity. The Connectivity Plan in rural schools, today we have connected more than 200 schools throughout the country, and we have an objective of more than 2,000 rural schools to be developed who urgently need Internet. Without Internet and without high-speed broadband, we're missing an important step within the education framework of this country. So digital literacy, more than 370 digital one-stop shops have been connected with digital content, training is offered, new jobs have been created and basic digital literacy for senior people, and a programme, which is a literacy network in vulnerable areas. This is really focused on those people who from the state receive some kind of subsidy. We want to help these people through a state which allows people to resolve their basic problems and to enable people to be digitally literate for those who need it most of all.

And, of course, one of the many activities is the most simple programme, which is our Project of Digital Inclusion with a view to give equipment and hardware to those who are really caught in this digital divide.

Of course, I wanted to mention the national plan, which is the Digital Country Plan. We have a task ahead of us. In Argentina, we have more than 2,000 different municipalities and there are more than 3,000 different areas within this, so areas with less than 10,000 people, the situation was very basic, some much these areas, they didn't have web pages, there weren't any Internet dashboards, so one of these solutions, to have more than 1,000 municipalities in the country -- and we're working on different themes, which, of course, all contributes to the main objective to reduce the digital divide.

I'd also like to point out that as part of the development of the satellite policy of ARSAT where there was an enormous divide between use of the Satellites 1 and 2, and the current situation where we have more than 95% of the use of these satellites, which is incredibly important, as part of the convergence to reduce the digital divide so that in some places it is the -- the satellite solution is the most fit for purpose one in order to achieve the objective.

I'd like to say that we cannot be considered a country for development unless we have a strong boost from the government

with our team, to have exchanges and discussions, to work towards a real connection between the different sectors unless we can make the appropriate development of the ICTs. This is the absolute condition that we need. We're not going to move forward on the different plans that we have under way unless we can meet this essential condition, the development of the ICTs.

In this vein, we are working, and over the next few months you will also see many of these things come to fruition. We are working on convergence through work undertaken over the last few months. We really want to see Argentina has the adequate framework in place in this regard. Of course, we're also going to work on all aspects and standardization aspects, which we need to do with fiber optic networks, within public works in order to promote access. We will also work on protecting investments in fiber optic sector and to take all the measures that we need to in order to strengthen the antenna installation and installation of networks across government offices and to really work very strongly on all the services -- the services sector.

We are going to make big directives in the quality of the services. The only thing we're looking in the development here is delivering to the citizen so the citizen has all the benefits of an ICT and to address the digital divide. Within this framework, being able to anticipate growth in the spectrum policy are absolutely fundamental, and in this section we would like to work in standardization sectors of ITU because this is also an essential component so that this country can grow.

On this we are still working, but we're going to focus even further on communication and our state commitment of modernization and communications throughout the provinces. It's absolutely essential that all of this, as we have said -- we'll reveal all of this -- we'll do all of this collective live working with the teams throughout the provinces. We are working on development, detailed mapping of the problems of connectivity, in order to offer the best solutions for all of the different districts and provinces in terms of communication and connectivity.

Through this we're going to generate all of the enabling conditions possible going towards 5G and all the themes of the Internet of Things. Jeremy Rifkin, who is a very notable author on this area on renewable energies as well, the numbers are quite impressive when we look in 2017, tons of -- thousands of people connected on the Cloud computing. Just a few years ago there were 3.5 billion people connected, and now more than 10 billion people are connected on the Cloud, so this -- just over ten years, it has gone further than we might have imagined.

Of course, we're going to continue to work very robustly on all of this by exchanging views -- exchanging views with all people with the aim, that I said, to develop infrastructure and quality services. With this, we're going to generate the

development of the ICTs.

The digital strategic plan, of course, is the very key to all of this, and within this the digital inclusion plan, I want to be really clear on this, we're going to make -- do all we can to have real digital inclusion in Argentina and to close the divide, which I spoke about earlier.

In this vein, I would also like to stress in particular the efforts of development and investment, both from the larger businesses who are working in Argentina -- these are companies who are leaders in their sector and will show Argentina, but also the hundreds and thousands of smaller businesses who are working every day in all areas of the country. We would like to give all of them clear rules which are balanced and reasonable but also to give them a lot of forecasting to work with. As the President said, a large democracy should progress, and this is part of progress. If progress is not made, it can start being -- it can stop being democratic. Therefore, this is within all our hands, the sector. Each of us has to play our role, and each of us faces a very important challenge. What the President and what our government team wants is a digital future, which has Argentina at its very core as its protagonist. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

>> Thank you very much, your excellency.

Honored guests, ladies and gentlemen, the Opening Ceremony is coming to a close. I would request that everyone remain seated while we leave the podium. The first Plenary will begin in just a few minutes, and I take the opportunity to wish everyone, on behalf of all the guests on the podium, a very successful and enjoyable World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017, here in the beautiful City of Buenos Aires. Thank you.

(Session concluded at 12:03 p.m.)

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